

The Jacob Journal

Happy New Year from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

January 2003

Serving the Cities of:

El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the
communities of:

Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos

Serving the Indian Reservations
of:

Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

Schools take closer look at volunteers

When Sheriff Bill Kolender and I unveiled California's first regional sex offender pin map available on the Internet last summer, we wanted parents to be more aware of dangerous predators lurking in San Diego County neighborhoods.

We also urged moms and dads to access the State Megan's Law Database to make certain that their children were not coming into contact with registered sex offenders. This constantly-updated list contains names, photographs and criminal records of convicted sex offenders and is available at most law enforcement facilities throughout the County.

A teacher who heeded our advice and logged onto the Megan's Law Database was shocked when she noticed the photograph of a man currently volunteering at a Clairemont-area school—a man who had twice been convicted of sex offenses.

How was the man allowed to volunteer at a school? Don't schools have access to the Megan's Law Database?

Last month, thanks to KFMB radio personality Rick Roberts and concerned citizens, we discovered that there was no uniform county-wide policy among San Diego County school districts that calls for mandatory background checks for campus volunteers.

Now however, at the request of Supervisor Greg Cox and me, the San Diego County School Boards Association and the County Office of Education have agreed to work with the County to close this glaring gap when it comes to the safety of children in our schools.

In the coming year, educational leaders will develop a uniform policy that prohibits sex offenders from volunteering in schools and the County will draft a policy that makes certain its employees and volunteers who work with kids have their backgrounds checked for sex offenses.

In addition, we plan to use a unified voice to ask the State to grant schools immediate access to the Megan's Law Database.

By adopting a region-wide policy, individual school districts will be able to implement procedures to identify members of a dangerous criminal population who, according to law enforcement, seek to spend time with children.

Districts might enact a simple and cost-free check of the Megan's Law Database, or decide to commit funds toward more extensive criminal background checks. Whatever the procedure, it's clear that the will to protect children from dangerous sex offenders is growing stronger and stronger.

Thanks, in large part, to a courageous

"It's clear that the will to protect children from dangerous sex offenders is growing stronger and stronger."

- Supervisor Dianne Jacob



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Background Checks

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group of parents, the Poway Unified School District is already working to determine how it will implement its version of the policy. Recently, Poway parents were outraged to learn that a district employee had pleaded guilty to charges of child molestation. Poway parents felt the district did little to notify the campus community about the situation and are now asking that the district take a proactive approach to notifying parents when an employee or a volunteer has been convicted of a sex offense.

To its credit, the district has said it is willing to work with parents and is interested in developing curriculum that would teach educators how to identify inappropriate behavior or signs of sexual abuse. Poway's willingness to take action is a good sign that other school districts will take seriously the need to check the background of school volunteers.

There are almost 4000 registered sex offenders living in San Diego County communities. Mental health experts seriously doubt whether this particular criminal population can be rehabilitated and many say it is only a matter of time before a sex offender will take another victim. Parents deserve to know that schools and the County are playing it as safe as possible beginning with background checks for volunteers.

State must remove Ramona from airport short list

With its large ranches, egg farms and acres of pristine grasslands, the peaceful rural community of Ramona is one of the last places in the County suitable for the roaring jets of a bustling international airport.

Yet, the small town remains on a short list of potential sites for a new regional airport—a list that already has been paired down to just twenty-one sites.

In July, I joined Ramona residents to appeal to the interim Regional Airport Authority, the governing body tasked with finding an appropriate location for an international airport, to remove Ramona from the list. Not only is rural Ramona the wrong place for a full-scale airport, we argued, the site would encourage Los Angeles-style sprawl and, by all accounts, the financial costs of such a massive project would be astronomical. The interim Airport Authority took no action.

Late last month, California State Assemblymember Jay LaSuer heard our pleas and plans to introduce State legislation that would take Ramona off the list. Assemblymember LaSuer discovered that Ramona has been noted on airport studies dating back 30 years, but the town always has been taken off the list early in the process.

I agree with Assemblymember LaSuer that forcing Ramona residents to endure unnecessary anxiety over the project just isn't fair and I commend and support his legislation.

Finding a suitable location for a new international airport for the San Diego region is no small task, but removing an obviously nonviable community from a list that's caused much stress to an entire town is easy. Our State legislature should act now.



Keep Ramona Peaceful: Supervisor Jacob and Assemblyman Jay LaSuer tell reporters why Ramona is the wrong place for an international airport.

Health of region's children and families improves

Fewer teen-agers are having babies, fewer children live in poverty, and more students are staying in school, according to the latest San Diego County Child and Family Health and Well-Being Report Card.



The annual report, initiated four years ago by Supervisor Greg Cox and me, shows other encouraging trends. Fewer young people are smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol. Higher numbers of residents are being immunized, and residents are suffering fewer unintentional injuries that require hospitalization.

Year after year, the County has made great strides in many areas of child and family health and well-being. This has been possible through collaboration with

youth groups, religious organizations, schools and families. Our immediate challenge is to maintain our gains as we face the State budget crisis.

Each year the Report Card tracks 22 indicators in five different areas. The 2002 Report Card showed gains in most areas but room for improvement when it comes to alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle crash injuries and deaths among young people ages 16 to 20, and young people attempting suicide.

It takes a community-wide effort to make progress in all five areas. The Board of Supervisors and our community partners have initiated many programs that positively impact children and families. Now more than ever it's imperative that we seek creative, efficient solutions to address child and family well-being.

The Report Card is available to the public. Please call (619) 685-2244.

Jacob serves up more than just coffee in Alpine

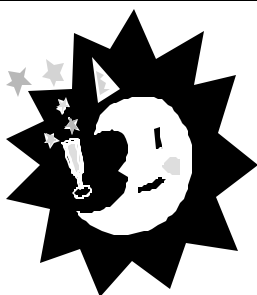
Supervisor Jacob loves the bread at the Bread Basket Restaurant in Alpine, but there was more than muffins on the menu last month when Supervisor Jacob stopped by to host a coffee with constituents.

The Supervisor handed out nearly a dozen giant checks to various community groups that are working to make Alpine a safer, healthier and more enjoyable place to live.

Supervisor Jacob loves returning tax dollars to communities and loves to find out how you think she can help make the Second District the best place to live, work and play!



Check It Out: Supervisor Jacob was pleased to help the Friends of the Alpine Library.



Happy New Year!

The new year brings new challenges. These challenges give us the opportunity to make our County an even better place to live. From my family to yours, please accept my very best wishes for a safe and healthy 2003!

- Supervisor Dianne Jacob

Get The Jacob Journal!

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FEB-03

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